

CPM PROJECT

PROJECT TITLE - PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

RON CONNER

SC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

March 15, 2019

BACKGROUND

The South Carolina Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) includes the Highway Patrol, State Transport Police, Bureau of Protective Services, Office of Highway Safety and Justice Programs, Immigration Enforcement Unit and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Officers Hall of Fame. The administrative functions of SCDPS are primarily performed within the Office of Financial Services (OFS). Within the OFS, the Office of Resource Management (ORM) is comprised of the following departments:

Mailing Services - receives and delivers agency mail at the Blythewood Complex and surrounding offices throughout the state. The scope of the services being rendered primarily impacts DPS employees; however, other customers include US Citizens and like state agencies.

Asset Management & Inventory Control – Accounts for all SCDPS assets (vehicles, equipment, etc.) that are acquired through appropriated funds, or other means approved by state law(s), and the disposal of those items through established and documented procedures. The services provided by this department involve the Surplus Property Office, Department of Archives & History, and the adherence to various state and federal laws.

Fleet Services – Manages and coordinates all activities relating to the acquisition and disposal of vehicles and associated fuel cards. While the services provided directly impact SCDPS employees, Department of Administration's State Fleet and the Surplus Property Office, as well as other state agencies are external customers.

The Warehouse – Oversees the ordering, receiving, storing, and distribution of supplies and materials. Although, the employees mostly interact with external shipping companies, their internal distribution routes allow for them to deliver to all SCDPS employees.

Procurement Department – Facilitates the acquisition process for goods and services, to include shopping carts, purchase orders, and awarding of contracts. The primary customers are internal and external; however, the services provided also may impact the general public, due to the spending of taxpayers' funds.

Facilities Management – The building maintenance for the Headquarters location operations. Their daily responsibilities primarily have a direct impact on SCDPS, SCDMV, and external customers.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Each department has employees that perform their daily work-related responsibilities in an effective manner. However, their work process may be inefficient due to controllable and uncontrollable variables. The research of this project should reveal process improvement opportunities for each employee in their respective areas of responsibility. Also, by identifying more efficient ways to perform functions, the value to SCDPS will be optimizing time, efforts, and resources by eliminating redundant, unnecessary, and/or inconsistent processes.

DATA COLLECTION

To truly understand how each department performs their daily responsibilities, it was determined that there were not too many options to consider, due to lack of time and historical knowledge. The supervisor in the mailing department has worked for the agency for approximately two (2) years, the Fleet Services Manager has worked for the agency for approximately seven (7) months, and the Procurement Director has been a SCDPS employee for two (2) years.

The primary data collection was provided by interviews with staff from each department. This collection method was selected to provide a true baseline in how each individual employee performed their daily tasks and why they performed each task in the manner they described.

Although multiple departments may have documented processes and procedures, the staff interviews revealed if each and every employee knew their department's procedures, followed the procedures, and/or deviated from the procedures, if applicable. In the event there wasn't any documented processes and procedures, the interviews would expose how they met the requirements of their job responsibilities.

Residual data collection was provided by a brief survey that produced questionable results. The survey results may be skewed, due to the potential fear of the results having a negative impact on how they're evaluated by management. Further inquisition with the staff revealed that they may not understand that there may be a more efficient manner to do their job, because they are comfortable with their current processes.

DATA ANALYSIS

Below, key findings based upon the data collected from each department are:

Facility Management:

- No written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
 - No written policies or procedures to establish consistency in the work processes
- Training was either on-the-job (OJT) or previously learned skills
 - Vast inconsistency in how work is performed
 - Very minimal training opportunities
 - Training was denied for various reasons
- No baseline in determining when to insource or outsource work
- No documented process of how to prioritize work

Procurement:

- No written SOP or any type of policies or procedures

- Training was either on-the-job (OJT) or previously learned skills
 - Vast inconsistency in how work is performed
 - Very minimal training opportunities
- No documented process describing how to prioritize work
- Very reliant on the State Procurement Office
- No method in disseminating/delegating work to staff
- Basic knowledge of State laws that apply
- Internal customers lack knowledge of process; therefore, process is stagnant
- Inefficient in processing requests due to various reasons (incomplete shopping cart, wrong funding information, no vendor information, etc.)
- Contracts expiring without replacement

Asset Management & Inventory Control

- Has an outdated SOP
- Dependent on internal customers timely response and accuracy
 - Documentation may be incomplete or inaccurate
 - Wrong funding information
 - Request are made after procurement transaction is complete
- Very reliant on hard copy documents
- No current follow-up process in place to address untimely Turn-in Documents
- Training may not consistent with written procedures

Warehouse

- Has a current SOP
- Well trained staff

- Has established internal control methods
- Delivery system may have some flaws
- May purchase outdated items that are no longer needed due to lack of communication from internal customers (i.e. toner cartridges for printers)

Mailing Department

- No written SOP
- Primarily OTJ training
- Lack of resources

Fleet Management

- No written SOP
- Primarily OTJ training
- Lack of resources
- Dependent on internal customers timely response and accuracy
 - Documentation may be incomplete or inaccurate
- Must adhere to policies enacted by State Fleet
- 3-4 different software applications required to perform duties

The data revealed that the lack of documented policies and procedures, insufficient training for employees and internal/external customers, relatively high volume of incomplete/inaccurate service requests, and inconsistent/outdated practices have impacted the efficiency of each department's work flow process. The major cause for the inefficient work flows is due to the lack of updated departmental documented procedures. The lack of current documented procedures has resulted in significant delays in the timely completion of services rendered by the employees of the impacted departments. Many employees stated they did what they were told by

their previous supervisors (even when they knew it was wrong) and/or what they thought was the right way to process certain activities pertaining to the position responsibilities. Training opportunities were either rarely provided or inconsistent with the documented procedures or the state laws. Unfortunately, due to an overall lack of accountability, internal customers did not provide complete and timely work requests to the ORM staff. In many cases and due to lack of internal controls, the ORM staff did not timely follow up on incomplete requests for various reasons.

The data collected from the survey did not bring substantive value to the problem currently being addressed. For example, five (5) out of seven (7) employees stated they have a working SOP. Per my research, there is only a working SOP in the Warehouse and the Asset Management & Inventory Control departments. All seven (7) employees believe they currently work in an efficient manner. The data concluded that there are severe deficiencies in majority, if not all, of the ORM departments. Three (3) of the seven (7) employees confirmed that they consistently rely on their coworkers to perform their daily tasks, while two (2) employees stated they do so sometimes and two (2) responded with rarely relying on their peers. Another revelation that didn't coincide with the data was that five (5) out of seven (7) employees conveyed that they feel that they are adequately trained to perform their current job responsibilities. The concern with that response is that the work product, work process, and overall competence of each department's staff may not be consistent with that belief. Another reason the survey results may be skewed is due to the response to the question "In your opinion, how likely can a new employee perform their job duties with minimum supervision or assistance immediately upon hiring"? Two (2) employees replied with "Very likely", two (2) other employees stated "Likely", one (1) employee revealed "Neither likely nor unlikely", and the final two (2)

employees responded with “Unlikely”. Based upon the previous question, five (5) out of seven (7) employees believe they were adequately trained. If that was the case, the results to the final question would have mirrored that ratio.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Based upon the results of the data collected and analyzed, the following process improvement methods will be implemented in each ORM department:

Mailing Services – the recommendation(s) below should be implemented within six (6) months upon management’s approval.

- The Postal Services Manager shall document the daily activity processes by all employees within her department. The documented processes shall include her delivery routes internally within the Blythewood Complex, as well as her outside routes off the premises.
- The Postal Services Manager shall cross-train her staff to be a multi-functional asset within the department. Due to lack of resources, all Mailing Services employees must have a basic understanding of all roles associated with their function within the agency.

Asset Management & Inventory Control – the recommendation(s) below should be implemented within six (6) months upon management’s approval.

- The Inventory Controls & Records Manager shall revise and update the department’s SOP to reflect the current step-by-step manner in how he processes requests relating to SCEIS and SCDPS’ workflow.
- The Inventory Controls & Records Manager shall cross-train his staff be a multi-functional asset within the department. Due to lack of resources, all Asset Management &

Inventory Control employees must have a basic understanding of all roles associated with their function within the agency.

- The Inventory Controls & Records Manager shall develop necessary internal control mechanisms that'll reduce untimely and inaccurate requests by internal customers.
 - Develop a training guide to educate SCDPS employees on how to properly document a service request.
 - Implement a system that will follow-up on documents forwarded to internal customers to complete in a timely manner.
- The Inventory Controls & Records Manager shall reduce his reliance on paper by utilizing the agency's shared hard drive to store documents.

Fleet Services – the recommendation(s) below should be implemented within six (6) months upon management's approval.

- The Fleet Services Manager shall develop a SOP that will govern how the agency acquire, maintain, and process vehicles.
 - The SOP must incorporate all state, federal, and/or State Fleet processes/procedures that are applicable.
- The Fleet Services Manager shall develop a training guide to educate SCDPS employees on how to properly acquire, maintain, and process a vehicle request.

Procurement Department – the recommendation(s) below should be implemented within six (6) months upon management's approval.

- The Procurement Director shall develop a SOP that will govern how the agency procure goods and services.

- The Procurement Director shall cross-train his staff be a multi-functional asset within the department. Due to lack of resources, all Procurement Department employees must have a basic understanding of all roles associated with their function within the agency.
- The Procurement Director shall develop an extensive training curriculum for shopping cart requesters/approvers, internal customers, and management.
 - The training must provide a baseline to address the challenges that prevent the timely and accurately processing of purchase requests.
- The Procurement Director shall continue to learn the state laws and procurement-related best practices and incorporate within her staff trainings.

Warehouse - the recommendation(s) below should be implemented within one (1) months upon management's approval.

- The Supply Manager shall develop an email template to use department-wide to communicate with internal customers when a delivery is being signed by someone other than the intended recipient.
 - The email must include the person who signed for the item and the intended recipient, while briefly stating the package was delivered and to whom it was delivered to.
- The Supply Manager shall review the current SOP to ensure it accurately reflects how the department current operates.
- The Supply Manager shall cross-train his staff be a multi-functional asset within the department. Due to lack of resources, all Warehouse employees must have a basic understanding of all roles associated with their function within the agency.

EVALUATION METHOD

Within six (6) months after the implementation steps are incorporated in each department, another survey and/or interview will be conducted to determine if the changes did result in a more efficient overall process. Also, the follow-up survey/interview will inquire if they staff feel more confident and competent performing their daily work-related responsibilities.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research and data revealed that many employees will only do what they're told and will not invest much effort in providing an overall quality service to their internal and external customers.

Common themes shared from staff were:

- This is the way we've always done it
- My supervisor told me to do it this way
- I thought this was the way to do it
- I had no idea that was wrong
- I don't think that is my fault
- This is how "they" do it

The most important recommendation that I can share would be for each employee to hold themselves personally accountable to perform the quality service that is expected of them. Ask the right questions and research before you make a final decision or process a request. Also, employees must truly understand the scope of their responsibilities and how external variables may impact the services they provide. By identifying any external variables and proactively incorporating necessary internal controls, their work processes will be more defined and efficient. With the above-mentioned implementation plan, the efficiency of the services provided and the competence in each department is expected to significantly increase overall.